

STATE SENATOR • DEBORAH CHERRY • 26TH DISTRICT

Cherry Press Release



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CHERRY BILL TO ALLOW ELECTRONIC TESTIMONY PASSES SENATE

(LANSING)— The Michigan State Senate this morning gave unanimous approval to a bill allowing expert testimony to be obtained by electronic means. The bill, sponsored by Senator Deb Cherry (D-Burton), will allow local courts to acquire critical testimony in a more timely manner at lower cost.

“We must do everything we can to make our courts as efficient as possible,” said Cherry. “Crime victims should not have to wait for justice while the courts and the witnesses try to make their schedules match.”

Senate Bill 681, which allows local magistrates to take expert testimony from witnesses via video or telephone will encourage courts to take advantage of current technology. In addition, courts can limit travel costs for experts. Current law requires all witnesses to be present in the courtroom for preliminary exams. Cherry’s bill does not alter the requirement that witnesses be present at trial in order to protect a defendant’s right to confront their accusers.

“In boardrooms and schoolrooms across Michigan, technology is enabling easy, cost-effective communication among people around the world,” said Cherry. “There is no justification for prohibiting courtrooms from doing the same.”

The bill, which was supported by the Prosecuting Attorney Association of Michigan and the Michigan State Police now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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